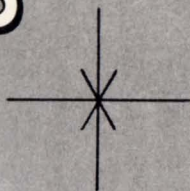


PEGASUS



december, '59

VOLUME VI — No.1

DECEMBER, 1959

PEGASUS

Pegasus is a literary publication of Lowell State Teachers College and is published bi-annually under the auspices of the Student Government Association.

FOREWORD

We, of Pegasus, like any businessmen before a sale, have checked and rechecked our material to the point where we feel that we can offer you, the reader, interesting, varied, and enjoyable reading in this, our first issue of the 1959-60 college year.

Under the guidance of our new advisor, Dr. William Burto, we have presented what we feel to the best from the students of Lowell State Teachers.

Dennis DiGennaro
Editor-in-Chief

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AUTUMN

The poets say that Autumn's sadness grieves
The heart. If this be so, what devil sent
This vibrant carousel of colored leaves
That tumbles past my door in merriment?
They say that Autumn is a maid who weeps
For her lost love. Instead I seem to see
A noisy, raucous child who runs and sweeps
Before him all of Nature's gay debris.
They say that Autumn is a song — an old
And lovely symphony of tints. From where
Then comes this clashing dissonance, this bold
Loud, brassy chord that seems to pierce the air?
And if the year is dying, as they say,
How dare the Autumn wear a shroud so gay?

Linda Brown

ON PAINTING A SCENE IN MARBLEHEAD

Elusive colors!
Highlight and shade —
Brush — why do you blunder so?
The tower stands proudly
Above peaked homes.
The reds and the yellows, they glow!
How dully I translate
With paper and paint
What my soul's eye discerningly sees.
Would I could convey
With brush and with paint
What this seaside town
Whispers to me.

Annalise Cotton

OF NATURE, YOU AND ME

I spent the morning with morning things,
The noon with lively mood.
But evening brought a quiet moon.
And with it solitude.
Soft beneath a sad blue sky
The Pine and Maple lean.
A breeze that curls among their boughs
Colors the lonesome scene.
Alone. Alone. The owl cries
From somewhere in the pine.
Ah, the bird that does not know
That two hearts beat in mine.

Dennis DiGennaro

An Accident

Brenda Vinecombe

As he moved along the road, he seemed completely oblivious to the surroundings. Even as three boys on bicycles passed him beeping their horns and waving small bright flags, he appeared not to notice.

He walked lamely and cautiously, almost by degrees as if each step drew much from his strength, yet he never lessened his pace. His right leg dragged slightly. While putting his weight on the left leg and leaning in that direction, he would hold the lame leg stiffly and swing it slowly in a somewhat circular movement to the front of him.

He was lean and appeared well above medium height, despite the stoop of his head and shoulders. It was a pathetic body that seemed to move from sheer will power.

At that moment a large black sedan appeared on the road out of nowhere and there was a ghastly penetrating scream as the brakes were pushed down with great force. It came to a stop about two yards in front of the bent old man, and the car lurched forward slightly from the impetus. The car backed up slowly until almost parallel to the man who stood as still as if paralyzed.

A middle-aged fleshy man wearing loud sports clothes and a bright golfer's hat emerged from the car and walked quickly up to a convulsive form that lay in the road.

"George, you come right back here," a woman's voice screamed, and as if to enforce her will, she opened the door and stepped out. However, upon seeing the gruesome spectacle, she recoiled, covering her face with her arms and pressing against the car, as if she feared the figure might suddenly rear up and attack her.

She appeared to be a woman in about her mid-forties, and was dressed in gaudy attire similar to the man's. Her wide, loosely formed lips were painted purple-red.

"It's all right, Esther, jest some fool animal run smack in front of the car, don't have the sense to know no better. Com'on, we'll drive into the town and tell the police, they'll finish it off."

"Yah mean the thing ain't dead?" the woman questioned disbelievingly.

"Esther, there ain't nothin' I can do; it wasn't my fault the damn fool thing run out like that; now let's" - - - he stopped short, noticing the old man for the first time who had hitched himself over to look at the animal. After a moment the old man raised his head to look at the couple. Esther drew back still further at the sight of this strange bent old man, and even George's corpulent face appeared stunned.

Added to the distorted shape of his body, the old man's eyes were as black as if they were only two holes leading into the obscurity of his skull. And then just for an instant his entire body shuddered as if a cold tremor went through him.

"Ah had a little accident," George volunteered, "fool dog jest run out in front of us, didn't he Esther?"

"George, George, let's get out of here, that feller don't look jest right ta me," Esther murmured.

The pathetic figure moved a few steps closer to the dog. The only movement he made as he looked at the animal was to close his fists tightly, then open them and spread the fingers apart rythmically as if to match the creature's spasmodic movements with his own.

The dog lay stretched out on its side, surrounded by blood which was gradually forming an oblong pattern about him. The dog was a half-grown male collie. Its hind legs moved slowly and convulsively, similiar to the motions of a tired bicyclist, and its full golden tail slapped weakly at the pavement. A trickle of thickening blood from one of the nostrils contrasted strikingly with the tannish golden bristles of its snout. Its mouth jerked open to receive a final rush of oxygen and with this new strength he lashed out his hind legs as if trying to rear, and then as suddenly lay quiet and motinonless in the liquid of his arteries and veins.

As the dog lay at last still, the old man's fingers abruptly stopped their contortions and dropped to his sides.

"Now ain't that a queer one," George murmured, breaking the spell, "almost like he was a lyin there, or maybe seen the likes of it before. Now don't that beat all?"

"George, lets leave, there's nothin we can do — and that feller — he ain't jest right."

"Now what's he up to?" George murmured, for as he spoke, the old man slid his right leg out from his body and knelt down heavily on his left knee. With his left hand he grasped the lifeless body at the base of the neck directly above the shoulders and pushing his right hand under the body clasped his arm around the stomach and raised himself up bearing the red form gently in his arms as if it were human.

As if this last gesture of the old man's were too much for her, Esther emitted a gasp, climbed inside the car and turned her head.

The old man crossed the road and in a similiar position to that in which he had lifted the dog, deposited it gently on some leaves.

The darkening aureate color of the dead beast's fur made a sharp pattern on the frost-blackened leaves and pinpointed those few golden ones as yet not lost to color and life. The old man did not rise, but stayed close to the dog, and stroked its fur, smearing it with handfuls of leaves in an effort to remove the hardening blood.

"George, I can't stand anymore," Esther said emphatically, "and besides . . ."

"All right, all right, Esther, it's jest I never have seen the likes of this before. That fellow's one queer acter! What's this?" George murmured, and walking over to the right front end of the car, he picked up a shiny metal object.

"What is it, George?"

"This sure is queer, Esther; peers ta be a medal with somethin' ferrin' writ on it — 'Crux de Gurr'."

"Oh George, for heavens sake it's probably part of that beast's collar — throw it away and get in. You know we promised Cousin Henry we'd be

there to see him march in the parade. He's so proud of his uniform. Hmph, could you imagine him acting like that?" she queried, looking disdainfully in the old man's direction.

"It beats me though," George replied, tossing the medal in the old man's direction and climbing into the car. "Darn funny goins 'on," he said starting the motor.

And then casting a last look at the bent old man he murmured, "And jest why deya suppose a body'd do a thing like that anyways?"

DEATH OF A ROSE

A fragrance sweet pervades the air.
A lovely maiden, standing fair,
Seems not to note the passing hours;
But Death comes swiftly to the flowers.
Dressed in flaming red she stands.
Fallen, the leaves that were her hands.
How her head bends low, low, low!
Yet, no one notices her woe.
Her velvet petals, turning back,
Show ink-dipped edges, ugly black.
A dying maiden droops her head.
A willow weeps.
A rose is dead.

Kathleen Marie Cryan

The Song Speaks

Kathleen M. Cryan

"Out of the silence, we shall make music!" A vibrant, triumphant chord shatters the stillness and gives birth to a song. Listen! Now, nothing exists but the melody. It has a voice all its own! Listen! Hear it swell and swirl and beat its thundering heart!

Softly sing me; sweetly sing me, I am a peaceful note. Leap, now! Throw me to the farthest cloud! Faster! I am a crescendo. Hurl me! I am a daring note. Ah, bring me back again before my pulsing heart bursts with joy! Lift me! Let me drift lightly in the air and then hold me there. Hold me! Never stop! Dash me to the ground; throw me to the sky! Chop me into a thousand bits of staccato, but only let me live. Sing! Sing, for I am made of music and when I die, I shall burst in a puff of ecstasy.

continuous motion.

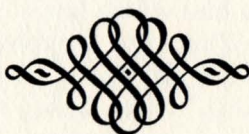
There was no shape to it, for it was almost a shadow, outlined by a slight reddish hue that changed shape in a senuous motion as it slithered along the ground.

"It's alone and I've got him," John was almost giggling as he took a sighting. Gleeefully he aligned his rifle, "I've got him, I've got him," he whispered. So slowly, ever so slowly he squeezed off a shot. Then another. The thing burst, and crackled, and dissipated, leaving behind it a strong smell of ammonia. John ran out from behind the rock and bent over the purplish stain on the dry ground. He ground a clod between his fingers and then . . . pain. Seering pain gripping his whole being. His eyes ran down to his legs; through both were two gaping holes which paralyzed his complete body. Then nothing.

Motion was John's first sensation. He tried to move his hands and feet, but there was no response. Slowly he focussed his eyes onto his swollen hands. They were tied to a metal pole; so were his feet. "An animal. Like an animal. Bound across a pole like so much lion. Good God."

Pain returned and with it blessed nothingness. John came to stretched across a long table. He was still unable to move, except for his eyes. Even these were of little use; the strain had blurred his vision so that he saw nothing but a gray haze. His mind groped for answers.

WHAT DO THEY WANT ME FOR? FOOD? AN EARTH SPECIMEN? I READ ONCE WHERE MARTIANS CAME TO TEST THE EARTHMEN. HA. THE EARTHMEN WON IN THAT ONE. John rested silently, his eyes closed. He opened them again. I'LL BE DAMNED. I WAS CAUGHT AGAIN WITH A SLEEPER. He giggled. I wonder if he's dead? His eyes rolled in a circle. What do they want? What do they want? John's eyes cleared a bit. He ran them up and across the walls; an object. Slowly he settled upon the thing on the wall. It cleared. Carrow opened his mouth, but nothing came forth. On the wall was the head of Doctor Francis Hawks. Beneath it was an inscription of some sort. John's eyes ran back and forth over the words again and again. IT LOOKS LIKE CHRONIMS . . . — CHRONIMS GOOD GOD. THAT'S WHAT IT IS. TROPHIES, I'M GOING TO BE A TROPHY. His whole body screamed; then relaxed. He giggled, then laughed soft, then louder, then hysterically . . . I WONDER HOW MANY CHRONIMS I AM?



SONG OF AN AFTERNOON'S WALK

Take our hand, son,
And toward the park our feet direct,
Forgetting day labors —
Tramping out the summer sun.
Let laugh lead on,
And watch our shadows dodge the forest sentinels,
Those knobby oaks and elms — to climb one is to conquer.
Not forgetting the birds, the pigeons,
Dowagers every one who peck and coo
And crane their necks to see beyond the other,
Gossipers behind ruffled feathers.
Quietness to shade the ears and shade to still the eyes,
The day hangs like an afterthought to smokey conversation,
And shadows lengthen.
Our lake-bound sailboat box has had its course.
Now our hand, son,
To find our feet on homeward ground,
And cross the little wooden bridge.
No time to linger now ; the day is spent,
But soon another dawns.

James B. Mitchell

THE HANDS OF LOVE

The hands of love know my desire
By candlelight and warm hearth fire.
The hands of love are chaste and pure,
Cool and refreshing, swift and sure.
The hands of love are strong and exciting ;
They hold the adventure of life inviting.
The hands of love are absurdly gay
With a bubble of laughter for a rainy day.
They can bring a star in a small nosegay
And brush the mundane cares away
Their magic touch opens rapturous doors.
My dear, the hands of love are yours.

Nora Harrison

I RAN ALL THE WAY

I ran all the way.
I ran to open the door,
And they were all there,
And you were there.
You were there!
You smiled and opened your arms,
And I ran to hold you, kiss you,
And just breathe in the closeness of you.
We were alone for a moment ;
We were all the world,
And it was beautiful!

Carol Dispenza

DEATH OF A TREE

A silence sad enfolds the wood
Where, wrapped in moss-green cloak and hood,
The great Goliath lies in state
Upon the forest floor.
Gnarled fingers! Once you caught the moon!
You laughed and would not let her go!
And once, a golden globe of sun
Carressed your hair before she set!
But now, tall pines shall guard for years
The tomb, where bathed in willows tears
An old tree lies.
Your emerald armor — how it gleamed!
Brave spouse of nature — so you seemed!
How proud you stood, as though you should
Be called the ruler of the wood!
But now, your limbs are wrenched apart.
Your great heart beats no more.
So lie in state, brave oak, then sleep,
Upon the forest floor.

Kathleen M. Cryan

DAISIES

Like drops of gold with rays around,
Bright daisies cheer the barren ground
And just before the days first light,
Caress the blackened face of night.
Resplendant in a sea of green,
Their dew-washed countenances seem
Like sun-rays dropped from out the sky.
But there their heads are not so high!
Throughout the day they seldom sigh,
Unless a breeze be passing by.
But oh! They too would like to soar!
Tis this they want, and nothing more.
Transpirant in the setting sun,
They fold their petals, every one,
And shudder in a solemn bliss
When some stray sun beam stoops to kiss.
All's silent now. The cloak of night
Has smothered every trace of light.
Still silent grasses softly hold
The daisies and their weight of gold.
Proud bushes by their weight are laid;
Crushed violets, beneath them, fade.
But daisies only seem to fold
Like withering sages, growing old.

Kathleen M. Cryan

A Fable - the Robin and the Owl

Linda Brown

A wise old Owl was sitting on a limb thinking about the influence of Nietzsche on modern thought, when the Red Red Robin came bob bob bobbin' along.

"Live, love, laugh, and be happy," sang the Robin, noting the Owl's downcast expression.

"Oh, shut up," said the Owl, who was wise enough to know that quiz shows are rigged and there aren't any blueberries in the muffin mix. "How can one be happy when there is so much evil in the world?"

"Evil!" exclaimed the Robin. "Who cares about Evil when the sun is shining?"

"But the sun isn't shining, the Owl pointed out. "It looks like rain."

"Rain may glisten, but still I listen for hours and hours," chirped Red.

"Listen to what?" asked the Owl, who was technical as well as philosophical.

"Why, to the song of the birds, the murmur of the laughing brook, and the happy hum of the bumblebee," the Robin replied.

"The world is filled with suffering and injustice," said the Owl, "man is infinitely unperfectible, not to mention neurotic, and you sit around listening to the happy hum, *et cetera*. Your *tabula* is obviously still *rasa*, and probably always will be."

The Robin, who was very much insulted by this remark, flew away and lived, loved, laughed, and was happy until one day a nearsighted chicken hawk gobbled him up. As for the Owl, he remained upon his limb, forming abstraction upon philosophical abstraction until eventually he disappeared into the real world of ideas.

Moral: Beware of near-sighted chicken hawks.

ANCESTORS

Be quiet, a moment.
Hear us in your blood?
Feel those Celtic chains?
Know the dark, hot flood
Of manic gloom?
You are ours. We made
You in our image. We
Formed your fears. We laid
The foundation of
All your years. We called
Up the banshee who cries
Your demise. Her cries
Be quiet a moment.
Hear her cries?

Jean Maguire



Allo, Ennui!

Jean Maguire

We sat in the dark little café, drinking absinthe and staring at the dingy ceiling. Each of us sipped, yawned, stared at the ceiling, and sipped again, following our customary boring ritual.

It was dull that night, dull with the emptiness of inexorably moving time. We knew that in another year we would still be sipping absinthe, yawning, and staring at the ceiling. What did it all mean? But the inevitable answer bounced back from the fly-specked ceiling into our glasses and we hiccuped with the nothingness of the unanswered question.

I sluggishly recalled that Jacques (or was it Henri?) had left his comb in my apartment the night before. But of course, it was Henri. He is constantly combing his silly little mustache with it. He cares for his mustache. He loves it with a wild, futile passion. We forgive him his lapse of integrity because his passion is, at least, decently futile.

But suddenly, Jacques grinned an absinthe-induced grin and poked Melanie in the ribs. She shrieked with laughter, breaking the awesome silence with her crude glee. The nothingness was gone; we would have to do something most drastic if we were ever to find our void again.

Philippe had it. "We must climb the Eiffel Tower," he said. "But," murmured Babette, "happy people, tourists, God save us, climb the Eiffel Tower." "We shall climb it in an insignificant new way. We shall climb up the sides, hand over hand." "How meaningless," I sighed, "let's do it."

When we arrived at the foot of the Tower, we drew lots to see who would have the empty experience of being the first to begin the climb. Philippe drew the short straw.

We began, one by one, to follow him, hand over hand, up the uncomprehending side of the Tower. At first, my hands were sweaty and trembling, as they grappled with the cold black steel, but I quickly recovered my ennui. Soon, we were all again floating in our void.

In the midst of our unmeaningful bliss, we heard a sharp gasp, then a thud, far below. We looked down and saw Jacques, splattered all over the foot of the Tower, consumed in the last, most crashing boredom of them all.

That night, Henri (or was it Philippe?) went home with me. Whoever he was, he forgot his toothbrush.

PEACE OF THE CHAPEL

The dark in the chapel is the dark of peace.
The quiet that descends is heavenly made.
Flickering candles glitter and gleam in the
coolness of the dark altar, and peace is found
by all who come to pray.
A cavernous space is perceived by those who
enter searchingly.
It is the void of the universe, with only the
stars positioned winking solidly.
Searchers are guided through the dark by these
beacons, wavering but not hesitant.
The tabernacle light pierces the dark, a silent
shriek calling forward to what?
The bench is smoothed by use.
It cradles the searcher who is yet looking for
the goal.
The firm back allows no shirking from the final steps.
Velvet fills the emptiness, creeping, child-
like, to avoid detection.
There is a feeling that pervades the senses,
awake to the minute changes.
Dark, quiet, peace, then Love.
Love and forgiveness, surcease and fulfillment
are presented to the searcher.
Here is the good, the goal, the attainment of
that knowledge so few understand.
Divine Love is eternally hovering, waiting for the chance
to conceive and grow in the light of good,
and the noise of charity.

Ann Toomey



The Flesh, The Devil, and Stanley Curtin

Louis C. Dispenza

Midway in his journey through life, Stanley Curtin, Thirteenth Vice-President of the Almagamated Sewing Machine Company, dropped dead. He died of a heart attack during his midafternoon coffee-break.

Death was quite a shock to Mister Curtin, but in the next few seconds he received another jolt. For he found himself in a long corridor sitting in a plush foam-cushion chair. He knew he was dead, but he didn't know where he was. He felt his body relaxing and his anxiety pass in a very few minutes. A sudden calm came over him, just as it used to come after he had an important board meeting with his mistress. This was death, and he had nothing to do, but wait.

He glanced down the long corridor, and he saw five or six more chairs arranged in a row in front of him. All the chairs had occupants, but their bodies were not in a position for Stanley to see. Next he glanced at the coloring of the room. The walls and the floors were lined with glowing red velvet, and the ceiling was as black as the inside of a vault. On the wall, to his left, there was an emblem of some sort, and it resembled the two-faced Roman God, Janus, but the faces weren't in a horizontal position. One face was toward the floor, and its eyes were wide open; the other face was pointing to the ceiling, and its eyes were closed.

The room was exceedingly warm, and there was a strange glow from a giant chandelier that hung from the ceiling. Each crystal seemed to glow

separately, and it seemed as if they were all trying to outshine one another. Stanley got quite uncomfortable again as he realized the full significance of his surroundings.

"I'm in Hell," he whined.

At that very same instant a scantily dressed female appeared in front of him. She was wearing a very thin red veil which matched the walls. Her slim body and sensuous features were a pleasure to behold, but her eyes were black and showed a void of any inner qualities.

"Mister Curtin," she said mechanically, "Follow me!"

Stanley Curtin got up and followed the girl to the end of the corridor. His mind was trying to put order into the happenings of the last few minutes; he searched for a logical answer.

"A dream? Too much booze? What am I doing here?" he thought.

"You're dead," was the answer he received from the thing in the red veil.

"No — I don't believe it," screamed Stanley.

"You knew it the minute it happened, so what's the use of fooling yourself?" she said in a monotone. "You spent your life deceiving yourself and others, and now there is no need for it."

A few feet from where they stood was a door. She took Stanley by the hand and lead him into an office. Her hand was cold, and it felt like a wrench that had been left out in zero degree temperature.

"Sit over by the desk, and wait!" she ordered in a tone above her usual style.

"For what?" asked Stanley in a subdued manner.

"An interview," and as she said that, she disappeared into the corridor again.

Stanley fell into the chair beside the desk. He was completely bewildered, but before his mind had a chance to function again, a man came into the room and sat behind the desk.

"My name is Flavius Aurelius, and my post in this organization is that of Director of Placement. I have held this post for three-thousand years, give or take a century or two," he stated flamboyantly. "And you are Stanley Curtin, age thirty-eight, married, and ex-thirteenth Vice-President of the Amalgamated Sewing Machine Company."

"Yes," whispered Stanley.

"Speak up, Mister Curtin. You always had something to say when you were alive, and you always said it loudly."

"How did you know?" asked Stanley.

"There isn't a thing we don't know about you, sir. Our agent who was attached to you filed a daily report of your actions," replied Flavius.

"What agent?"

"Come, come Mister Curtin don't be so naive. We have an agent for every person in the world. And I'm sure you know their duty is recruiting people for us. Do you think you got here all by yourself, ha?" he seated in a fatherly fashion.

"You can't keep me here," yelled Stanley.

"Tsk, ts, nobody, but that other person and Dante has left yet, and

I see by your record that you don't belong in their class."

Why? What did I do?" asked Stanley in a cracked voice.

"Oh, my badness! All you newcomers are the same. You never do anything. You're all as pure as spring water. Well, I guess I'll have to read you a few excerpts from your file," he said as he took a stack of papers from his desk drawer.

"When you were eighteen years old, you had an illegitimate son by a woman you promised to marry, but didn't. You left her and the child, and you went to Boston. In Boston you met a wealthy young lady and married her. Reason? Money! You went into business, and it failed, because you speculated heavily on the market. After that your wife got you a job with her father's firm, and you pushed a man out of a job who had twenty years' experience. From that moment on you accomplished nothing in business, but in the field of the senses you made great strides. Strides below the Platonic level, of course."

Stanley sat listening to the thin green-eyed man behind the desk with a feeling of nausea. His mind was clouded, and he was looking for a way to defend himself, but he knew he couldn't.

"You lied to your wife, you didn't give her any children, and you had a mistress. You cheated on your income tax, you stole from the company and you"

"That's enough," demanded Stanley.

"If you lived past thirty-eight, it could have been worse," said Flavius, as the corners of his lips curled to bring a smile across his white face.

"I'm not the only one who ever did that, you know," he stated in a feeble defense.

"Oh, I know. We've got pits full of men like you," replied the Director of Placement.

"It was your agent that did it. He persuaded me. Didn't he?" said Stanley defiantly.

"Sir, you didn't need much persuading," replied Flavius as he poured himself a drink from the decanter on the desk.

"Now what?" asked Stanley, knowing full well that he was doomed.

"Well, my job is to see that you get a punishment suitable to your crimes. This is the hard part. The way things have been going down here for the past few centuries, it's getting harder and harder to place people. You know we've had to reshuffle our whole system since Dante. Everybody has got a double work load. Sometimes I wish that people would try to get to the other place, but it seems it's easier to get here," he sighed as he spoke. "Every big organization has its problems."

"Well, where in Hell am I going? Maybe I can help in administration," said Stanley in a resigned manner.

"No, no. Sorry this post is only for veterans of two-thousand or more years. I'll have to find another spot for you," replied Flavius sympathetically.

"Where?"

"Well, with all the little actions you performed when you were alive, I could divide you up into almost all of the twelve circles," he stated.

"I thought there were nine."

"I never knew you read Dante," replied the Director quite astonished.

"I didn't! I heard the answer on a quiz program once," retorted Stanley.

"Well, you couldn't know it, but we had to add three more. I told you we had a complete change over since his time," added Flavius as he straightened out his flaming red toga.

"In the past two-hundred years things have been booming down here. There's been more evil in the world than ever before. Wars have become larger, dictators have become more powerful, and causes have become more noble. You know the old pitch, as the saying goes, first it was Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, then it was Manifest, Destiny, or on to Ethiopia. Oh, I could go on for hours," he sighed.

"What's wrong with wanting better things?" asked Stanley.

"Nothing! It makes good business down here. But these phrases were just cover-up for evil doings. You can cover up greed, lust, murder, and power politics very well, if there's a nice phrase or word to attach to it. In fact we have to have a staff of writers working all the time to keep up with the demand of today. By the way, Cuba has been one of our biggest customers at the moment. Machiavelli, of course, is staff director."

"Then mankind can't be responsible for what he does, if you control his mind," said Stanley with a flare of deductive reasoning.

"Hm, around the office we like to use the word 'suggest,'" replied the Director of Placement as he cleared his throat. "After all, man has free will, and there are always enemy agents from the other side trying to corrupt minds. They're almost as sneaky as we are. Man is still in bad shape, because we haven't completely stopped the flow of traffic to that other place. There are still a few good people, may my good ubiquitous, powerful, Lord and Master forgive the expression, roaming the earth. They are, of course in the minority, but you know the old saying, 'Today the minority, tomorrow the majority.' And my dear sir, you were not a member of the minority."

"I protest!" said Stanley vehemently.

"You, sir, are in no position to protest," replied Flavius calmly. "The charges have been brought against you, and you are guilty on all counts. You will now receive the proper punishment."

"What will it be?" asked the defiant sinner.

"I'd say you belong just about everywhere, but I think I'll send you to Madisonia."

"Where's Madisonia?"

"It's a new development and part of our two-hundred year plan. It consists of three new dens of punishment. Victorianora, Madisonia, and Stalinora. I believe you recognize the names. The Victorian age was the model for number one, Madison Avenue inspired number two, and Stalin, who, by the way, is working on a new short-term fifty-year expansion package plan, was the inspiration for number three. These three take into account the modern man, who, after all, has been so progressive. We did this to accommodate modern tastes; the crimes are old, but the innovations we

have made to fit them are new."

"Tell me about Madisonia, please!" pleaded Stanley.

"Let me tell you about the other two first," replied the Director soothingly. "Stalinora is a place of dictators, and it's not the old breed of dictators as in Dante's book. These gentlemen gathered in this hole make Nero look like the second fiddle twelve rows from the front. These gentlemen went in for dictatorship and murder in a big way. Hitler and his crowd, and Stalin and his roommates were the biggest butchers of all time, so they have the greatest burden to bear. This is talent, and we have put them to work digging graves for all the people they murdered. Excuse me, liquidated."

"I thought Stalin was working on a new package plan," said Stanley.

"He's digging at the same time. After all he's a thinking man too," replied Flavius.

"What do they do when they get finished?" asked the newcomer.

"We'll fill the holes, and they'll start digging again," replied the director smugly.

"What about Madisonia?" inquired Stanley.

"Later! Now Victorianora! The land of beautiful women, glorious homes, and bloated Englishmen. This was named after the age of so-called purity and virtue, two swear words down here. Exteriorly all is beautiful, but within there are the worms of deceit and corruption. The women are smiling and well dressed, but inside they are being eaten by lye. The men are fat, and the worms within are fatter. The homes are beautiful, and the termites and lice crawl freely inside. Regularly the Victorians are decapitated by a band of Zulus left over from the Boer War."

"I'm glad I'm not going there," replied Stanley with a sigh of relief. "But what about Madisonia?"

"That is worse than all the rest of the places that we have here," said Flavius.

"Oh, no," moaned the sinner.

"Madisonia is the home of the mass of modern deceivers. These are people who have killed themselves before they came here. Seducers, falsifiers, egotists, people who have been complacent and have only worried about material gain. This place mostly consists of obese Americans lulled by false values. Men and women alike are dressed in grey-flannel suits with narrow lapels, thin ties, soft hats, and horned-rimmed glasses. The ties are choking them, the clothes are tight, and the glasses are rose colored. And worst of all, they are chained in front of a television set which has nothing but commercials on it. They are occasionally raided by a party of Apaches. This punishment fits their crimes well. They have been doped by a mass media, and their sense of value was distorted beyond repair. That's the picture," said the man in the red toga as he leaned back in his soft chair.

"I won't go," screamed Stanley. "Please don't send me there."

"Tsk, ts, I'm afraid you'll have to. It isn't so bad after the first million commercials," said Flavius sympathetically.

"No, no, no," shouted Stanley, and with that he was whisked off to his punishment.

Flavius picked up the decanter and poured himself another drink, and he stated to himself, "These history lessons are such a bore, and I'm afraid this breed of men we've been receiving can't take the punishment as well as the petty tyrants of the old days. I'd take a good old murdering Centurion before I'd pick one of those characters. They just aren't making sinners as well as they were before. I'll have to speak to the Master about it."

Flavius adjusted his toga and turned to his beautiful secretary and said, "Who's next, Helen?"

TO —

It is so hard to sit here
And watch you, listen to you;
To sit and be outside still;
Not to be able to touch you,
To take your warm hands in mine,
To kiss your rough-soft face,
To touch you. To touch you!
It is so hard to sit here
And watch you talk and move
And think and smile;
To sit and listen to your slow, thoughtful talk,
Your careless phrases,
Your funny words,
Your easy laugh.
To sit, to watch, to listen,
When inside me everything is
Busy with desire for you!
Not to move or be too near;
Quietly waiting for you
To look to me:
Look, Look! Look in me!
Come; take me up quickly,
Let us hurry and know
All of life together:
Hurry from the woods, through the night, into the
morning sun!

Carol Dispenza

EXODUS

Chased by icy blasts
on the rusted crust of earth,
brown leaves scamper South.

Louis Dispenza

Rain

Carol Dispenza

It was raining. A slow, soft, sad rain, it was a rain that made Stacy Forrest feel both sentimental and romantic. She walked bare headed along the narrow, winding street. It was a busy time of day, and the street was noisy and loud with passing cars . . . I wish there were somewhere I could be alone and think; there's no place to just sit and think and be alone. I went to the woods because I' Ha! poor Thoreau he wouldn't have a chance today unless he was rich nuts . . .

She walked along, not looking at anything in particular. She had walked up and down this street so often in the past year that she felt it was her street, her very own noisy, busy, ugly street. She turned to look at some of the passing cars. A car with three boys in it passed her slowly. The boys all turned and whistled at her; the horn blew piercingly.

. . . How disgusting they'll look at anything as long as it's in a skirt idiots . . .

Another horn blared somewhere, and this was followed by the wailing of several other horns . . . Idiots . . . she wanted to scream . . . IDIOTS . . .

Stacy turned the corner and started to walk across the old wooden bridge. She walked faster, trying very hard to think of something beautiful or world-shaking. She could not; instead, muddled thoughts and vague memories persisted to ramble through her mind.

. . . I wonder if my skirt shows under my trench coat don't know why I bought this lousy coat anyway I hate it wonder if my skirt showed that night wonder where he is what's he's doing think of me yes I'll wait don't forget you silly nut you're sweet yes ah hm hm . . .

There was a pebble in her shoe. She walked on. She walked faster, then slower, trying harder than before to concentrate, to think, to **feel** something. The pebble stuck in the corner of her shoe near her little toe. She walked slower. She kept thinking nothing and walking; the pebble persisted. She stopped, took off her shoe. "Damned pebble!"

She continued on with her head down, deciding that this looked more pensive and would seem to suit her mood better than a head held high. She was coming close to the falls; she could hear the sound of the water rushing over the rocks. This was one of her favorite spots, for here she could stand and listen and watch and lose herself in another world. There was nothing beautiful or particularly striking about these falls. As a matter of fact, Stacy considered them (in her more objective moments) "a bunch of rocks with water flowing over them."

She leaned over the railing and looked down at the "bunch of rocks." She decided that this was a good place to meditate about life and living, and at last she would be able to think and to feel. A child screamed loudly behind her. Stacy did not turn. The child screamed louder. Stacy thought harder. The child began to cry and shout and holler and scream. Stacy looked around. It was a little girl in dirty overalls; she was chasing some little boy who had taken her cart. Stacy turned to the rocks . . . Look at you rocks you do nothing you have done nothing you just are you have just

been and now you're worn worn and weary yes worn and weary . . . She liked that . . . They seem to say "We have been we are the water flows or does not flow but still we have been still we are . . .

She was very thirsty. She looked in her pockets for a lifesaver. She had none. She thought of going to the drugstore for a drink, but then she would see people and they would be too horrible right now. No, no, she did not want to see anyone, didn't want to have to talk to anyone, or smile, or shake her head, or be polite. She did not want to break this mood; she wanted only to stand here and think and watch the water and listen to its sounds. The long blast of an angry horn made her jump unwillingly. "Dammit!" she said aloud. "Idiots!"

. . . "Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink" I always hated that lousy poem there must be something there though I still think it stinks albatross big deal . . .

The run of the water seemed to grow louder and louder and the falls were getting bigger and more beautiful until they were high in a mountain pass, narrow and tall, surrounded by green, tall grass and yellow and violet wild flowers that swayed gently in the warm summer breeze, and there she was, standing gloriously nude under the rushing cool waters, laughing and drinking in the spray and the beauty, cool and warm and beautiful all over all at once! Her body trembled, and she sighed refreshingly as she thought of it. She tried to run. There must be that waterfall somewhere, she thought, she had to find the waterfall and the flowers and the green tall grass, the peace, the beauty, the goodness . . . But there was nowhere to run, no waterfall, no stream, no green tall grass, and she would never stand "gloriously nude" anywhere.

. . . How sad there is nothing no peace no aloneness no thinking. Beyond our own little world people screaming blasting horns children crying pebbles in shoes reality security practicality conventionality conventions traditions clothes parties people things nothing anywhere I'm enclosed in a prison in myself money stinky lousy money because you need it and without it why why what's wrong anyway what's it all about "I went to the woods" the woods filled with No Trespassing signs no no don't without I want to run but where can I go I've got to run run run run . . .

"These kids toda, I tell you, they think nothin' of . . ."

Stacy turned and watched two elderly women chatter past her. She began to walk away from the railing and back down her noisy, busy street.

. . . Wonder what time it is I hope we don't have to wait for that idiot again tonight . . .

She smiled as she thought of that "idiot," and she said aloud as she walked on: "She reeks with the stench of conventionality!" Her smile broadened as she thought of this. "I must write something about that someday . . . 'She reeks with the stench of conventionality.' It's just too good!"

